

SPAWN



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McFARLANE

115



DIGITAL
EDITION

SPAWN.COM

TODD McFARLANE AND
IMAGE COMICS PRESENT

THE BRIDGE PART II

DEDICATED TO
THE 2002 OLYMPIC GOLD MEDAL
CANADIAN MEN'S HOCKEY TEAM

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SPAWN 114 SUMMARY

Ben Nakadai has never embraced the adventure of business travel. His current trip to Japan is no exception. On his first night in the land of his ancestors, he has a restless sleep and dreams a cryptic dream that haunts him the next morning. In the hotel bar, he meets the mysterious Mykoto, who informs Ben that Nakadai is a storied name in Japan. Mykoto embarks on a tale of Ben's samurai ancestors, but the story abruptly ends when Ben receives a phone call. While reflecting on Mykoto's story, a violent thunderstorm erupts and it may well be a harbinger of violence to come.



TODD McFARLANE
PRODUCTIONS



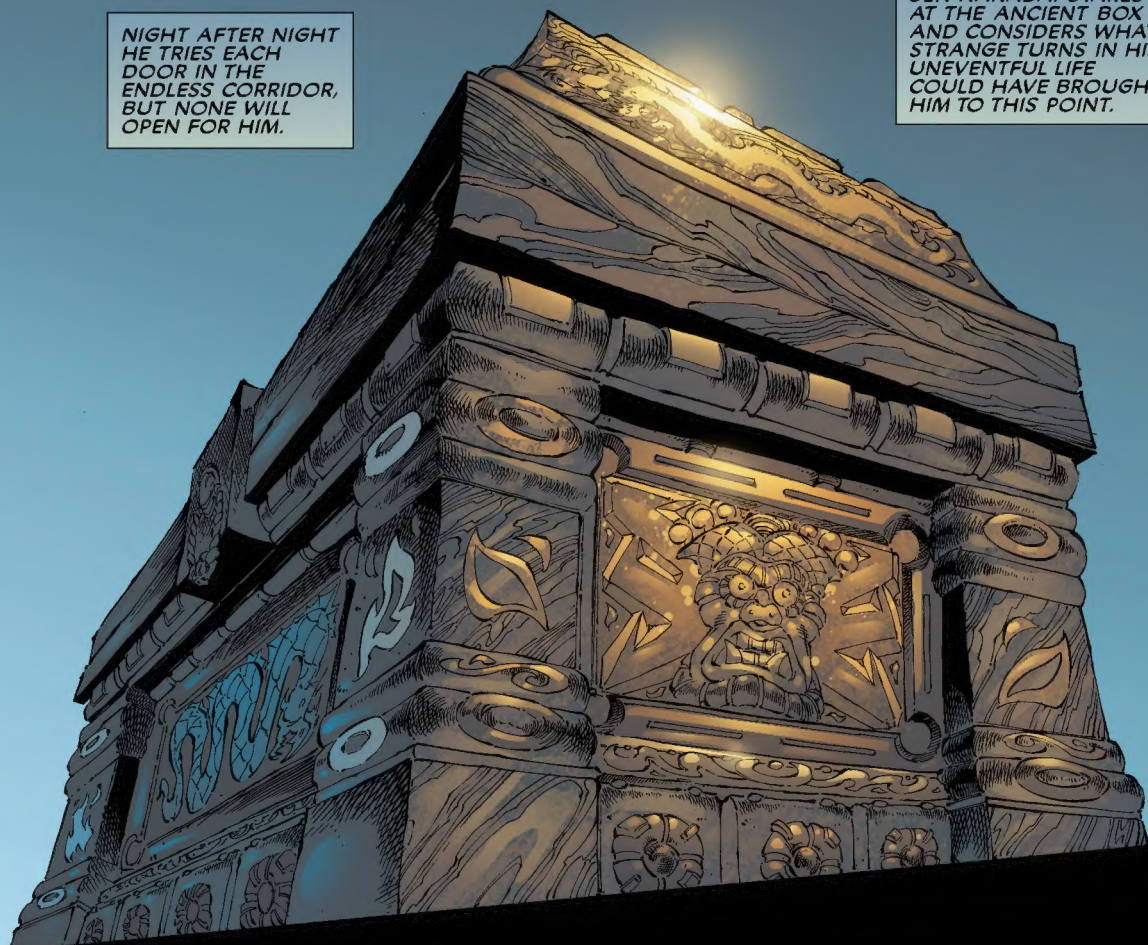
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A TALE IS TOLD OF A
GHOST WHO HAUNTS
THESE SHADOWED HALLS,
LOST FOREVER, UNABLE
TO FIND HIS WAY OUT.

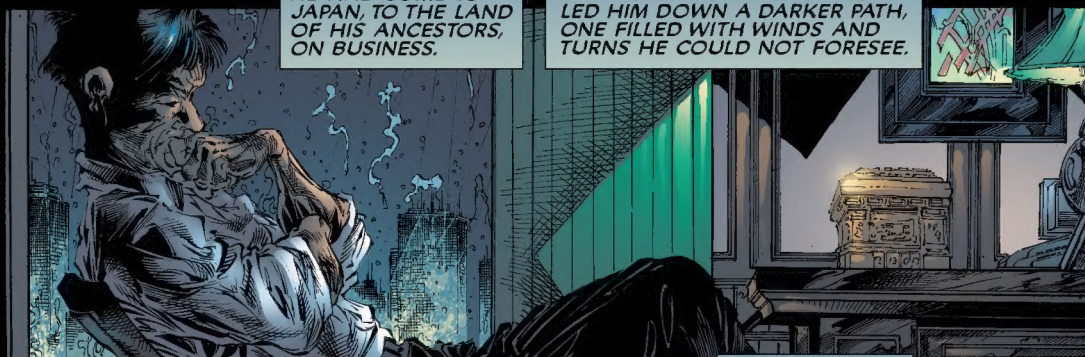
NIGHT AFTER NIGHT
HE TRIES EACH
DOOR IN THE
ENDLESS CORRIDOR,
BUT NONE WILL
OPEN FOR HIM.

BEN NAKADAI STARES
AT THE ANCIENT BOX
AND CONSIDERS WHAT
STRANGE TURNS IN HIS
UNEVENTFUL LIFE
COULD HAVE BROUGHT
HIM TO THIS POINT.

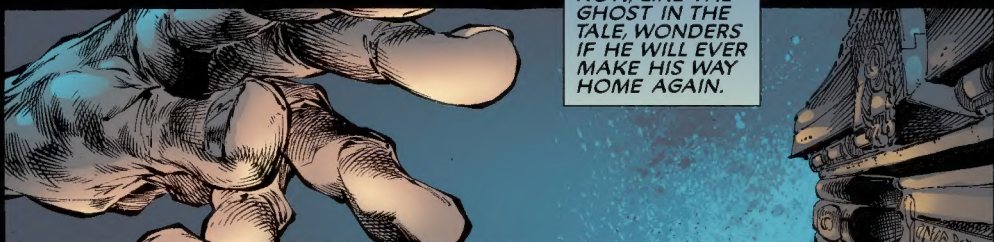


HE HAD COME TO
JAPAN, TO THE LAND
OF HIS ANCESTORS,
ON BUSINESS.

BUT THE FATES SEEM TO HAVE
LED HIM DOWN A DARKER PATH,
ONE FILLED WITH WINDS AND
TURNS HE COULD NOT FORESEE.



NOW, LIKE THE
GHOST IN THE
TALE, WONDERS
IF HE WILL EVER
MAKE HIS WAY
HOME AGAIN.



FOR BEN, HOME WAS ALWAYS CALIFORNIA, WHERE A BLUE-EYED WIFE AND AN UNBORN CHILD WAIT FOR HIM.

"JAPAN" WAS JUST A WORD, A VAGUE AND DISTANT PLACE FROM WHICH HIS ANCESTORS HAD EMIGRATED. IT HELD NO DRAW FOR HIM.

THE FIRM HAD SENT HIM TO AWAJI TO EXAMINE THE RUINS OF AN ANCIENT TEMPLE FOUND, WHEN THE PRIMORDIAL FOREST WAS CLEARED, ON THE SITE WHERE A RESORT HAD BEEN PLANNED.

THEIR CONTRACT REQUIRED THEM TO SALVAGE ANYTHING OF HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE IF AT ALL FEASIBLE.

BEN'S SUPERIORS HAD MADE THE SUBTLE BUT CLEAR IMPLICATION THAT THEY WOULD RATHER NOT INCUR THE TIME AND COST OF SALVAGING THE TEMPLE.

FRIGGIN' DEATH-TRAP IF YOU ASK ME.


BASTARD COULD COME DOWN ANY MINUTE. NOT WORTH RISKING MY MEN.

LOOK AT THAT. THAT BRACING AIN'T GOING TO HOLD. LIKE I SAID, A DEATH-TRAP.

I THINK I UNDERSTAND YOUR POINT.


ALL THE SAME, I'D LIKE TO MAKE MY OWN DETERMINATION.

OF COURSE, BEN. I'M SURE YOU'LL DO THE RIGHT THING.

A wide shot of Ben Tennyson standing in a traditional Japanese temple. He is wearing a dark jacket and a black cap with a green light. He holds a glowing yellow orb in his right hand. In the background, there are large stone statues and traditional wooden architecture.


SINCE THE NIGHT HE ARRIVED IN JAPAN, BEN HAD BEEN VISITED BY RESONANT, LIFELIKE DREAMS.

STEPPING ON THE TEMPLE GROUNDS, HE FELT A SIMILAR TUG OF RECOGNITION.

A close-up of Ben's face, looking down with a somber expression. The glowing yellow orb is visible in the lower part of the frame, casting a warm light on his face.


HIS SOUL FLOODED WITH ANCESTRAL MEMORIES, AS IF HE WERE SLIPPING INTO SOMEONE ELSE'S SKIN.

HE COULD SMELL THE HEADY MUSK OF INCENSE, HEAR THE LOW CHANTING OF MONKS REVERBERATE OVER THE CENTURIES.


Ben is shown from the chest up, looking at a stone tablet or scroll. The scene is dimly lit, with a strong light source from the left creating a silhouette effect.

AND HE KNEW, THOUGH HE COULD NOT HAVE TOLD YOU HOW, THAT SOMETHING WAS SECRETED HERE. SOMETHING GREAT AND TERRIBLE.


HIDDEN FOR HIM ALONE TO FIND.

A close-up of a large, weathered hand holding a glowing blue orb. The hand is positioned as if presenting the orb. The background is dark and indistinct.

NOW, AS HE SITS IN HIS HOTEL ROOM REGARDING THE AGED CASK, HE REMEMBERS THE ODD ADVICE A STRANGER RECENTLY GAVE HIM:

A full-page illustration of Ben Tennyson looking directly at the viewer with a shocked expression. His face is pale with dark circles under his eyes. Several glowing blue circles of varying sizes float around him, and a bright blue energy ring is visible on the left side of the frame.

"BEWARE THE UNANSWERED RIDDLE, BEN. DON'T FORGET TO LOOK YOUR DRAGONS IN THE EYE..."

A large, dark, and menacing figure, identified as Hellspawn, is the central focus of the page. He is depicted with a long, flowing black cape that has red lining, and a mask with glowing green eyes. He is crouched on a ledge or rooftop, looking down. The background shows a city skyline at night, with rain falling heavily, creating a sense of atmosphere and isolation. The lighting is dark, with highlights on the rain and the figure's cape.

THE HELLSPAWN WAS ONCE A MAN.
HE WAS A HUSBAND AND A FRIEND.
BUT ABOVE ALL, HE WAS A SOLDIER.


NOW HE'S NOT SURE WHAT
HE IS, BALANCED ON A GREAT
FULCRUM SOMEWHERE
BETWEEN DEATH AND DEITY.

BUT HE HAS CLAIMED THIS
WORLD AS HIS OWN, AND HE
WILL NOT SEE IT CORRUPTED.

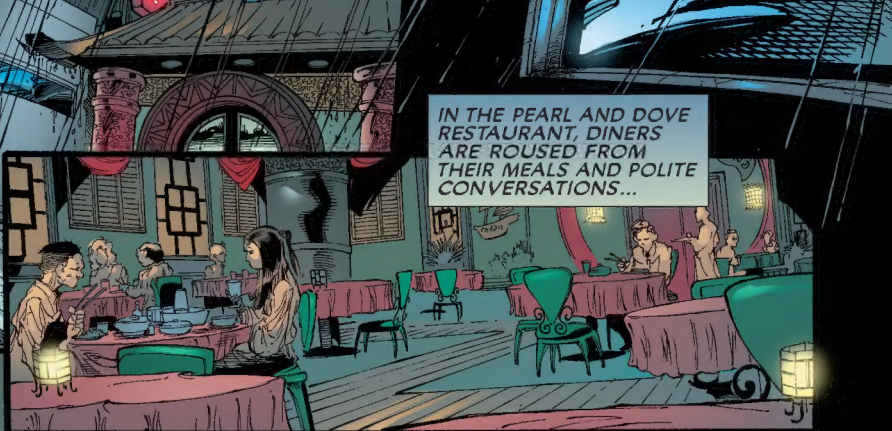
A SERVANT IN HIS
CHARGE ONCE TOLD
HIM THAT THIS WORLD
IS FULL OF DOORS,
DOORS OF EVERY SIZE
AND CONSTRUCTION.

AND BEHIND
EACH ONE YOU
WILL FIND THE
SAME THING:
CONSEQUENCES.


AS HE SITS
CROUCHED
OUTSIDE IN
THE DRIVING
RAIN, SPAWN
LISTENS TO
THE SHADOWS.
THEY ARE
FILLED WITH
THE SOUND
OF DOORS
OPENING IN
THE NIGHT...



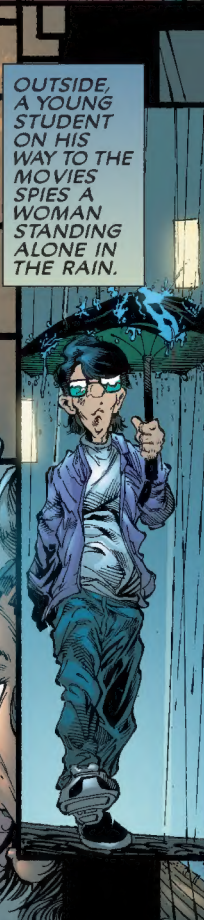
ON THE HIGH STREET, THE CONSEQUENCES HAVE BEGUN.




IN THE PEARL AND DOVE RESTAURANT, DINERS ARE ROUSED FROM THEIR MEALS AND POLITE CONVERSATIONS...




AS A BLIND PEDDLAR APPEARS, WALKING THROUGH TABLES, ONE HAND OUTSTRETCHED, WANDERING THROUGH A CITY WHERE HE ONCE ONLY KNEW GRASSLAND.



OUTSIDE, A YOUNG STUDENT ON HIS WAY TO THE MOVIES SPIES A WOMAN STANDING ALONE IN THE RAIN.




THE WOMAN WATCHES WITH IDLE CURIOSITY AS SHE QUIETLY BURSTS INTO FLAMES.




ON THE HIGHWAY THAT RUNS ALONG THE FOREST, A THIEF NAMED ORI SEARCHES FOR HIS HOME.

IN HIS RIGHT HAND HE CARRIES HIS HEAD, EYES CAST DOWN IN SHAME.




IN THE WOODS, YOUNG GEDDE HAS BEEN PLAYING HIDE AND SEEK FOR NEARLY A HUNDRED YEARS.

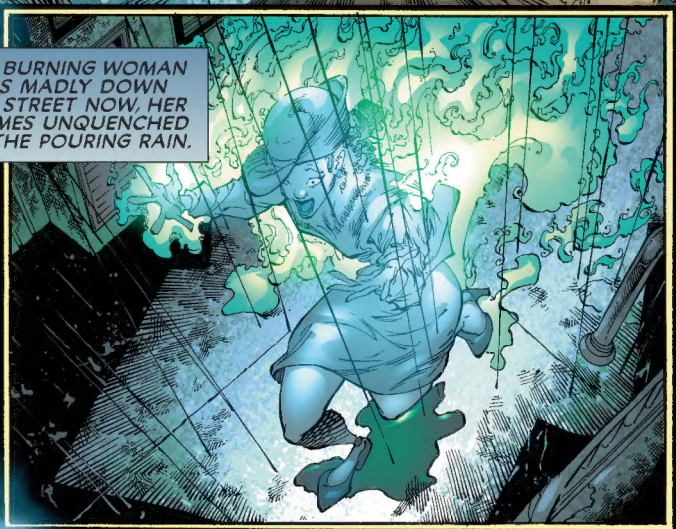
NO ONE HAS FOUND HIM YET.



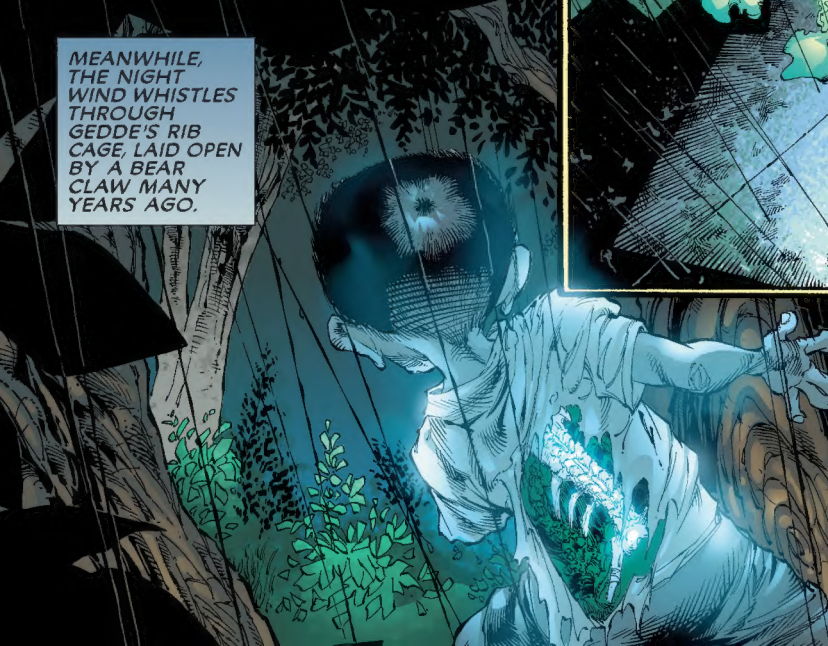
IN THE RESTAURANT, PATRONS SCREAM AND RUN WHILE THE PEDDLER SEARCHES FOR A FRIENDLY FACE.



ON THE HIGHWAY, TWO CARS COLLIDE, AS BOTH DRIVERS ARE DISTRACTED BY SOMETHING COULD NOT POSSIBLY BE SEEING.



THE BURNING WOMAN RUNS MADLY DOWN THE STREET NOW, HER FLAMES UNQUENCHED BY THE POURING RAIN.



MEANWHILE, THE NIGHT WIND WHISTLES THROUGH GEDDE'S RIB CAGE, LAID OPEN BY A BEAR CLAW MANY YEARS AGO.

GEDDE DOES NOT SEEM TO NOTICE.

THE PEDDLER WAS EXPECTING HIS SON TO MEET HIM.

>HELLO?<

AAAAH!

>SON,
IS THAT
YOU?<

HE WONDERS
WHAT'S
KEEPING HIM.

>PLEASE...<

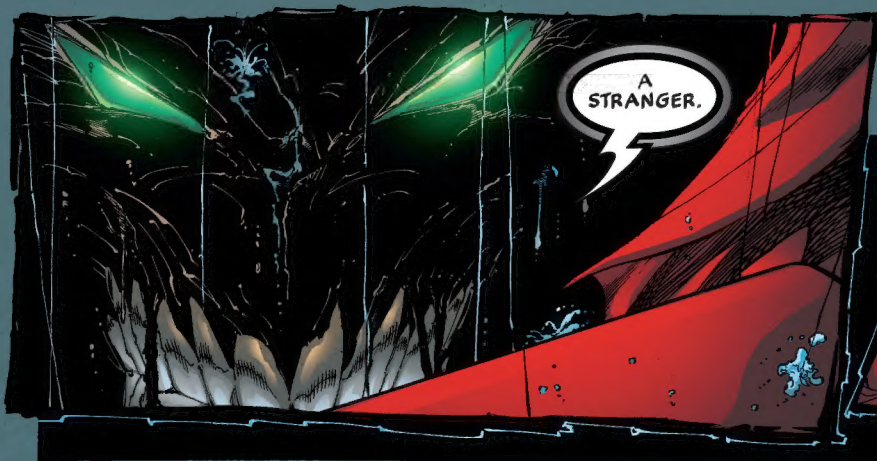
>PLEASE
MAKE IT
STOP!<

>HELLO...?<

>SON?<

>HELLO...?<

>WHO?
WHO IS
THAT
THERE?<



A STRANGER.



> I AM
LOOKING FOR
MY SON. I THINK
I'M LOST. <

BE STILL.

SPAWN DRAPES
THE BLIND MAN
IN SCARLET
BOLTS OF
DARKNESS...

I WILL
TAKE YOU
TO HIM.

AND IN A
MOMENT
HE IS GONE.

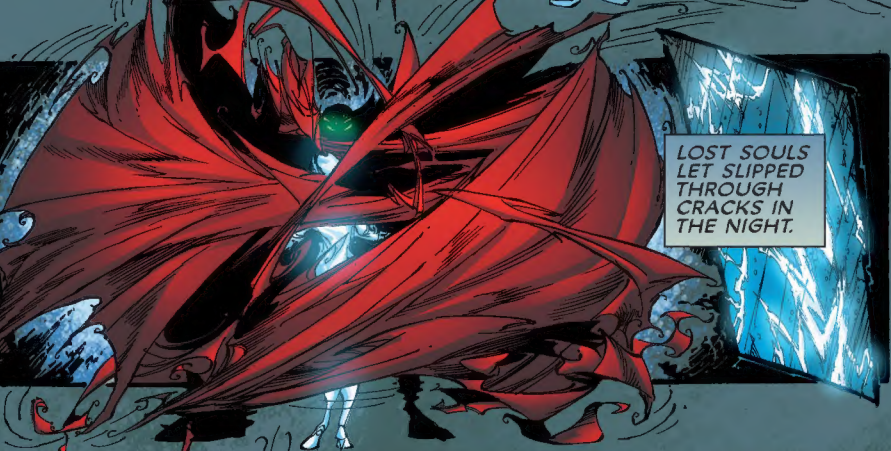


ONE BY ONE, HE COLLECTS
THE WANDERING SPIRITS.

> PLEASE... <



> HELP
ME... <

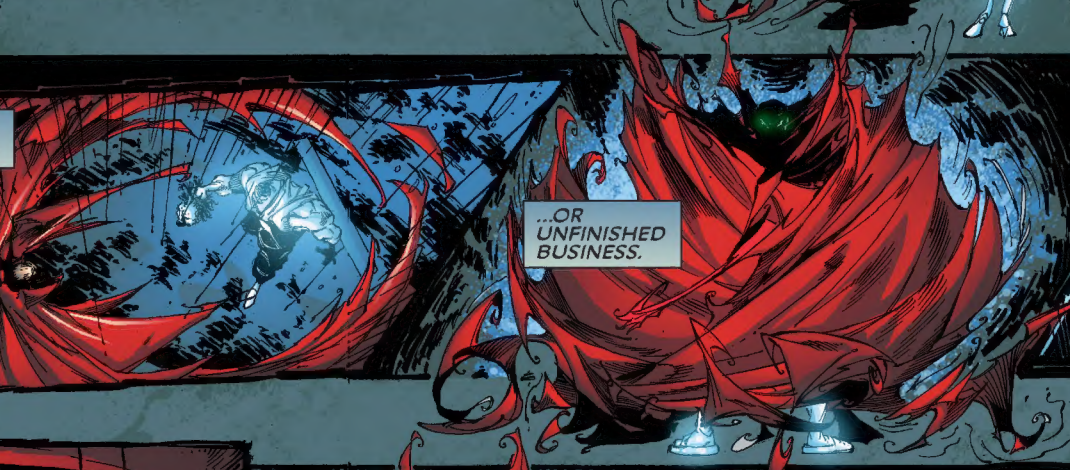


LOST SOULS
LET SLIPPED
THROUGH
CRACKS IN
THE NIGHT.



THEIR LIVES
MARKED BY
VIOLENCE...

OR
TRAGEDY...



...OR
UNFINISHED
BUSINESS.

EACH IN HIS TURN
IS LAID TO REST.



> I HID
REAL GOOD,
DIDN'T I? <

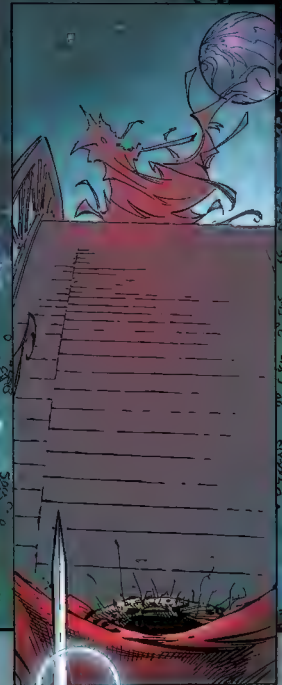
YES.




THE
GAME
IS OVER
NOW.

IT IS
TIME TO
GO
HOME.

YET ONE
GHOST
REMAINS



ONE GHOST
WHO WILL
NOT YIELD.




LORD NAKADAI'S
RESOLVE IS HONED
AND TEMPERED AS
HIS KATANA.

SPAWN REGARDS THE
SAMURAI'S FACE AND
UNDERSTANDS.

THERE IS BUT ONE
WAY TO SETTLE
THIS MATTER.

THEY BOW
TO ONE
ANOTHER...

AND IT BEGINS.



THE HELLSPAWN
WAS ONCE A
MAN. HE WAS
A HUSBAND
AND A FRIEND.


BUT
ABOVE
ALL, HE
WAS A
SOLDIER.

HE KNOWS
WHAT IT
MEANS TO
DIE A BAD
DEATH.

WHAT IT
MEANS
TO DIE
WITHOUT
HONOR.

A WARRIOR
DESERVES BETTER.





THEY DANCE LIKE LIGHTNING
AGAINST A SUMMER SKY,
LEAN AND SWIFT AS SWORD
BLADES.

IT IS A CONTEST
NOT OF POWER,
BUT RATHER
ONE OF SKILL.

IT IS A THING
OF BEAUTY. A
WORK OF ART.

SPAWN
BRINGS
HIS BEST
FIGHT.



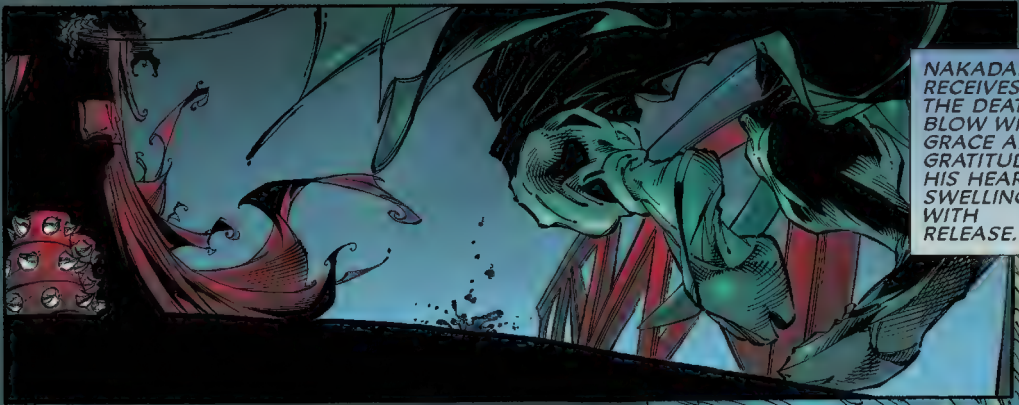
TO DO LESS
WOULD DISHONOR
HIS OPPONENT.

NEITHER
SAYS A
WORD.

THE RULES ARE
UNQUESTIONED.

THE STAKES
ARE CLEAR.

THE OUTCOME
INESCAPABLE.

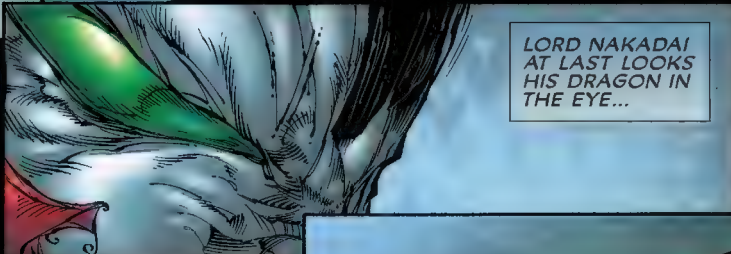


NAKADAI
RECEIVES
THE DEATH
BLOW WITH
GRACE AND
GRATITUDE,
HIS HEART
SWELLING
WITH
RELEASE.

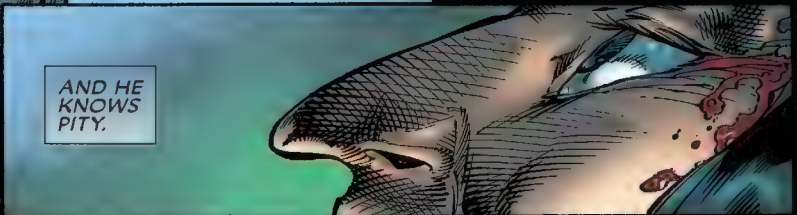


THANK
YOU.

AS HIS SPIRIT
PASSES ONCE AGAIN
FROM THIS WORLD,
HE REMEMBERS THE
WORDS AN OLD MAN
ONCE TOLD HIM.



LORD NAKADAI
AT LAST LOOKS
HIS DRAGON IN
THE EYE...



AND HE
KNOWS
PITY.



THUS,
ONE DOOR
IS CLOSED...



THOUGH
CONSEQUENCES
REMAIN.

Ah,
BEN. I
KNEW YOU
COULDN'T
RESIST.

YOU...
YOU WERE
BEHIND ALL OF
THIS SOMEHOW,
WEREN'T YOU?
THE TRIP...
THE TEMPLE...
EVERYTHING.

I SUPPOSE
I WAS, AFTER
A FASHION.

WHY
ME? WHY
DID YOU HAVE
TO LET ME SEE
THIS?

IT IS
BEAUTIFUL,
IS IT NOT?

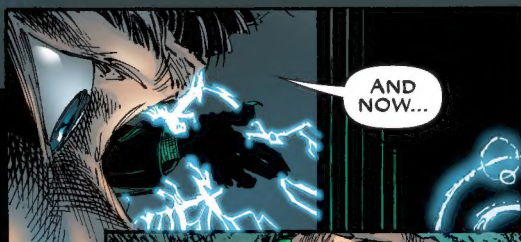
YES. IT
IS BEYOND
WORDS.
BUT TELL
ME, PLEASE.
WHY ME?

BECAUSE,
BEN, THAT IS
HOW THE
STORY WAS
WRITTEN.

WHAT
DOES THAT
MEAN? WHAT
HAPPENS
NOW? I
HAVE TO
KNOW.

YOU DON'T
GET THOSE
ANSWERS, I'M
AFRAID. YOU SEE,
IT WASN'T YOUR
STORY.

YOU'RE JUST
A THREAD IN A
GREAT TAPESTRY,
THE TINIEST COG
IN A GREAT
MACHINE.



AND NOW...

YOUR PART IS FINISHED. BUT YOU HAVE DONE ME A GREAT SERVICE, RETRIEVING THE CASK. FOR THAT, I THANK YOU.



AS TO WHAT HAPPENS NEXT, WELL, THINGS WILL INEVITABLY PLAY OUT AS THEY ALWAYS DO.

WHICH IS TO SAY, PRECISELY AS I HAVE INTENDED.



THE GENTLEMAN STRIDES THROUGH THE HOTEL LOBBY, HUMMING AN ANCIENT, WORDLESS TUNE, THE SWEET SCENT OF ORCHIDS TRAILING BEHIND HIM.



HE STEPS OUT INTO THE MORNING GLOOM.



THE SUN SHINES BRIGHT ON HIS FACE.



TAXI.

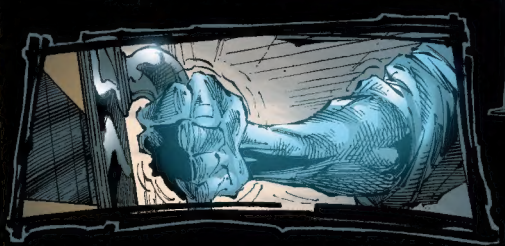
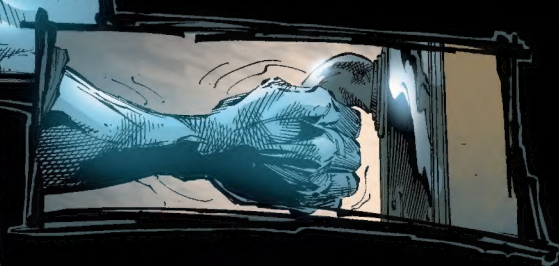


THE
AIRPORT,
PLEASE.



SO,
WHERE
ARE YOU
OFF
TO?

NEW YORK.
I MUST
ATTENDED TO
MATTERS
NEGLECTED
FOR FAR
TOO LONG.



HELLO?



ANYONE?

I...I CAN'T
SEEM TO FIND
MY ROOM. I LOST
MY KEY. I CAN'T
FIND MY WAY
BACK TO--



IS THERE
SOMEBODY
WHO CAN
HELP ME?



ANYBODY...?

A TALE IS TOLD OF A
GHOST WHO HAUNTS
THESE SHADOWED
HALLS. LOST FOREVER,
UNABLE TO FIND HIS
WAY OUT.

NIGHT AFTER NIGHT
HE TRIES EACH DOOR
IN THE ENDLESS
CORRIDOR,
BUT NONE
WILL OPEN
FOR
HIM...





Tyrant
Lizard
King

EMPIRE